(b) to (d) There have been 16 air crashes/accidents involving aircraft/helicopter of Defence forces in the past one year. Each accident is investigated through a Court of Inquiry and remedial measures are undertaken accordingly to check their recurrence in future. Besides, a continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgement and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Original equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), both indigenous and foreign, is also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. In addition, anti-bird measures are also undertaken.

Recalling of fishing vessels by Coast Guard

894. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Coast Guard is recalling fishing vessels frequently on the East Cost of India;

(b) how many such recalls were done for various reasons by Coast Guard between November 1, 2008 and January 31, 2009;

(c) whether it is a fact that Coast Guard has not held any talks with stake-holders in the fishery sector in this regard;

(d) the steps proposed by Government to carefully put in place instructions so that Coast Guard does not recall fishing vessels frequently and without adequate reasons; and

(e) the directions given to avoid interrupting fishing operations of boats?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) The Coast Guard enforces the monitoring, control and surveillance of the deep sea fishing vessel operating under the letter of permission (LoP) Scheme. Coast Guard checks that the deep sea fishing vessels have the mandatory clearances and they are recalled if such certification period expires. Also, deep sea fishing vessels can fish in a voyage not exceeding the prescribed period authorized for them in accordance with the procedure applicable. Whenever, the vessel is due for completion of voyage, they are recalled by the Coast Guard. The Indian Fishing Vessels which are not operating under the LoP are not recalled by the Coast Guard, unless found operating across the international maritime boundary line. Twenty two deep sea fishing vessels have been recalled between 1st November, 2008 to 31st January, 2009 for not fulfilling the requirement mentioned in their LoPs. The Coast Guard is only an enforcement agency of the Government of India to check that deep sea fishing vessels comply with the requirement of the conditions established by the Ministry of Agriculture. Periodic meetings in this regard are held by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Meetings between Coast Guard and fishermen

895. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has directed Coast Guard to hold meetings with all sections of the fishing sector frequently to avoid problems;

(b) whether it is a fact that Coast Guard has not held any such meetings between September 1, 2008 and January 31, 2009;

(c) the steps proposed to ensure that Coast Guard is accessible for meetings with fishermen; and

(d) the reasons for Coast Guard not calling mandatory consultative meetings with fishermen and small entrepreneurs in fishery sector?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Coast Guard undertakes community interaction programme regularly by adopting fishing villages and provide basic safety training to the fishermen. The community interaction programme is instituted in every Coastal State and Union territory every quarter. The Coast Guard has carried out 43 community interaction meetings with the fishermen along the coast between 1st September, 2008 to 31st January, 2009. The community interaction programme being undertaken by Coast Guard is a voluntary effort. Coast Guard acts as an enforcement agency of the Government to check that deep sea fishing vessels comply with various requirements and conditions set by Ministry of Agriculture.

Talks with Somali pirates to free Indian hostages

†896. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the relatives of Indian engineer and other personnel taken hostage by Somali pirates on 7th January, 2009, have requested Indian authorities to hold talks with the Somali Government for release of hostages; and

(b) if so, efforts made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Induction of cadets from NCC pool into Indian armed forces

897. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been actively considering to induct more cadets from the NCC pool into the officer cadres of the armed forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the strength of the NCC cadets would be increased and deployed at various important locations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Government has already earmarked vacancies in officer cadres of the Armed Forces for induction of National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets who volunteer and meet the requisite standards.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.